

## Bilirakis Op-Ed: Have Problem? There's a TAX for that!

Tax Day Op-Ed: Have Problem? There's a TAX for that!

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As millions of Floridians file their taxes today, they are reminded that far too often the tax code is used as a weapon to force American taxpayers to pick up the tab for Washington's irresponsible spending.

Instead of taking every opportunity to raise taxes and rob hard-working people of what they have earned in a rush to grow the federal government, Congress must put a cork in the spending and pass economic measures that let families and small businesses keep more of what they earn, so they can create jobs to kick-start our lagging economy.

As we try to revive the economy, President Obama and some in Congress are inflicting even more pain in the form of new taxes on our nation's most productive job creators.

Whether it is health care, energy or the federal budget - just like the iPhone catchphrase "there's an app for that" - House Speaker Nancy Pelosi "has a tax for that."

Massive government health care overhaul? There is a tax for that - more than \$500 billion worth, including new levies on health care savings accounts and medical devices.

Cap and trade? There is a tax for that - \$800 billion worth - every time you flip on a light switch.

The federal budget? There is a tax for that - \$1.4 trillion worth spread over the next decade.

All told, the Democrat-controlled House passed a net tax increase of at least \$1.1 trillion in 2009, to fund the culture of borrowing, spending, bailouts and takeovers, all over my objections.

To kick off 2010, Obama submitted his \$3.8 trillion budget proposal to fund the federal government. Under this new budget, the deficit soars to a record \$1.56 trillion and puts the nation on course to more than double the national debt. By the end of the decade, the deficit would exceed 5 percent of gross domestic product, a dangerously high level, which even the president's budget director called unsustainable.

Sadly, the burden to pay for this spending is placed on the backs of families and businesses in the form of a \$1.4 trillion tax hike spread across 10 years.

If that's not bad enough, White House economic adviser Paul Volcker said recently that the United States should consider raising taxes, including imposing a new European-style "value added tax" (VAT) on top of our current system. The VAT is a tax on manufacturers at each stage of production, the cost of which is passed to consumers.

Not surprisingly, Pelosi agrees, stating last October that a VAT should be "on the table."

Instead of placing a greater tax burden on current and future generations in an attempt to radically grow the government, Washington should tighten its belt and get out of the way of entrepreneurs by lowering taxes on families and small businesses.

Florida has nearly 2 million small businesses that provide a vast array of economic opportunities and innovative services. Nationally, small businesses employ more than half the U.S. workforce and create roughly 70 percent of our nation's new jobs each year.

Businesses thrive on certainty, but unfortunately Washington is presenting more questions than answers these days. Congress simply cannot continue to create an economic environment that stifles job growth and economic opportunity when we need it most.

The truth of the matter is that the entrepreneurial spirit of America, not government, is the engine of job creation. The challenges we face as a nation will not be solved by taking more from the American people and funneling it through the federal government. Instead, we need fiscal discipline in Washington and tax relief for working Americans. If only we had an app for that.

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